

# Work / Life

## TEN WAYS TO FOSTER INNOVATION

### NAVIGATOR

#### Highlights

- *Ten Ways To Foster Innovation*
- *Watch Movie Trailers*
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- *Current Memory Predicts Later Loss*
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In order to compete effectively, we must look for new and better ways to accomplish our mission. We must find creative methods to delight our customers. And we must find innovative strategies for getting more done with fewer resources. To grow, we must be constantly innovating.

An innovative company attracts and keeps better employees. People want to be part of something creative; it's stimulating and fun. Here are 10 things you can do to foster a culture of innovation and creativity.

**1. Live in the possibility.** Reinforce the belief that you and your team can find a better way to do anything you put your minds to.

**2. Always question what you do and why you do it.** Make sure everything you do is in alignment with your mission and produces the results intended.

**3. Challenge long-held beliefs.** Just because something's always been done a certain way doesn't mean that it's still the best way. As Anthony D'Angelo said, "Just because something is tradition doesn't make it right."

**4. Don't accept the first solution right away.** There are many possible solutions to every problem. Most people go with the first plausible solution that comes up, and they miss the value of thinking longer and finding more effective and elegant answers.

**5. Read. You can't learn less.** The more you know about something, the more you find that you don't know. By adding to your knowl-

edge base, you find more and more associations—and making associations is how seemingly magical things happen.

**6. Have fun.** Coming up with ideas on how to do things faster, more easily, and with fewer resources really is fun. Schedule regular brainstorming sessions and practice green-light thinking. Order pizza for lunch and focus on a problem or process—generate as many ideas as you can.

**7. Be around people in different industries.** By stepping out of your familiar territory, you open the door to new and different viewpoints you can use to your advantage.

**8. Challenge your team to look deeper.** When Henry Ford asked his engineers to design the V-8 engine, they said it couldn't be done. He said, "It will be done"—and, eventually, they did it.

**9. Make sure you have adequate "moodling" time—time to do nothing.** When we're constantly engaged in doing things, we don't provide the fertile ground in which ideas take root.

**10. Charge your subconscious.** Give your mind something to work on while you sleep. Before going to bed, select a problem you want solved, a process you would like improved, or a new product you would like to create, and then forget about it. Tell yourself you want at least three elegant ideas by the next day, and then expect to receive them. Trust me, it works.

NOTE: "Innovation & Creativity" is one of the 10 pillars of a world-class organization—get your special report on all 10 pillars by sending an e-mail to [wcb@SuccessNet.org](mailto:wcb@SuccessNet.org).

(Source: Michael Angier from Ener/Gem, number five of the Freedom To Achieve System—"Do Something That's Different"; <http://www.SuccessNet.org>)

#### WEB SITE PICKS

<http://www.apple.com/trailers/>

Watch movie trailers here. With everything in one place, available in multiple sizes (in case you are on dial-up), and in QuickTime files, you can scan the newest releases and the upcoming features you want to see. If you check back often, you only need to hit the "Newest trailers" section to see what's new. Some of these aren't even being shown in theaters yet as trailers, so you can get an awesome advance look.

#### FAST FACT

Only 16 cents of every dollar raised by the American Cancer Society, the largest public charity in the U.S., is spent on direct services to cancer patients.

(Source: Kenny Ausubel, *When Healing Becomes a Crime*)

Your vision will become clear only when you can look into your own heart.  
—Carl Jung

## INSPIRATION

### Growing Good Corn

In his book *How To Talk Well*, James Bender relates the story of a farmer who grew award-winning corn. Each year, he entered his corn in the state fair, where it won a blue ribbon.

One year, a newspaper reporter interviewed him and learned something interesting about how he grew the corn. The reporter discovered that the farmer shared his seed corn with his neighbors.

"How can you afford to share your best seed corn with your neighbors when they are entering corn in competition with yours each year?" the reporter asked.

"Why sir," said the farmer, "didn't you know? The wind picks up pollen from the ripening corn and swirls it from field to field. If my neighbors grow inferior corn, cross-pollination will steadily degrade the quality of my corn. If I am to grow good corn, I must help my neighbors grow good corn."

He is very much aware of the connectedness of life. His corn cannot improve unless his neighbors' corn also improves. So it is with our lives. Those who choose to live in peace must help their neighbors to live in peace. Those who choose to live well must help others to live well, for the value of a life is measured by the lives it touches. And those who choose to be happy must help others to find happiness, for the welfare of each is bound up with the welfare of all.

The lesson for each of us is this: if we are to grow good corn, we must help our neighbors grow good corn.

(Source: Steve Goodier, author, writer, and speaker; <http://www.LifeSupportSystem.com>)

Everything is drive-through. In California, they even have a burial service called Jump-In-The-Box.  
—Will Shriner

## HEALTHY FOOD TIP

### Current Memory Predicts Later Loss

Count how many animals you can name in 1 minute, and if it's 13 or fewer (17 is average among 70-year-olds), consider increasing your vitamin E and vitamin C intake.

Verbal memory appears to be an important predictor of future development of Alzheimer's disease. Ongoing administration of antioxidant vitamins leads to greater learning and memory retention and decreases the risk of developing this disease.

Very high doses of vitamin E result in a delayed deterioration of activities of daily liv-

ing in older people. (In this study, very high doses are considered to be 600 or more milligrams of vitamin E and 750 milligrams of vitamin C daily.)

Women who are current users of vitamins E and C, and even vitamin E alone, have higher scores on various memory tests than women who never take either of these vitamins. Vitamin C alone is not beneficial for cognitive thinking. Vitamin E alone is, but both together are better than vitamin E alone. A long duration of supplement use (10 years or more) produces even better results.

(Source: *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* 2003; 77(4): 975–984. Printed in *Nutrition Hints* by Betty Kamen, Ph.D., and Michael Rosenbaum, M.D.; <http://www.bettykamen.com>)

## HUMOR

### Definitions

ADULT: A person who has stopped growing at both ends and is now growing in the middle.

BEAUTY PARLOR: A place where women curl up and dye.

CANNIBAL: Someone who is fed up with people.

CHICKENS: The only animals you eat before they are born and after they are dead.

COMMITTEE: A body that keeps minutes and wastes hours.

DUST: Mud with the juice squeezed out.

EGOTIST: Someone who is usually me-deep in conversation.

GOSSIP: A person who will never tell a lie if the truth will do more damage.

HANDKERCHIEF: Cold storage.

INFLATION: Cutting money in half without damaging the paper.

MYTH: A female moth.

MOSQUITO: An insect that makes you like flies better.

RAISIN: A grape with a sunburn.

SECRET: Something you tell to one person at a time.

SKELETON: A bunch of bones with the person scraped off.

TOOTHACHE: The pain that drives you to extraction.

TOMORROW: One of the greatest labor-saving devices of today

YAWN: An honest opinion openly expressed.

WRINKLES: Something other people have. I have character lines.

## THINGS TO PONDER

### Reasons Why the English Language Is So Hard To Learn

1. The bandage was wound around the wound.
2. The farm was used to produce produce.
3. The dump was so full that it had to refuse more refuse.
4. We must polish the Polish furniture.
5. He could lead if he would get the lead out.
6. The soldier decided to desert his dessert in the desert.
7. Since there is no time like the present, he thought it was time to present the present.
8. A bass was painted on the head of the bass drum.
9. When shot at, the dove dove into the bushes.
10. I did not object to the object.
11. The insurance was invalid for the invalid.
12. There was a row among the oarsmen about how to row.
13. They were too close to the door to close it.
14. The buck does funny things when the does are present.
15. A seamstress and a sewer fell down into a sewer line.
16. To help with planting, the farmer taught his sow to sow.
17. The wind was too strong to wind the sail.
18. After a number of injections, my jaw got number.
19. Upon seeing the tear in the painting, I shed a tear.
20. I had to subject the subject to a series of tests.

## FOR REFLECTION

### Real Sight

The park bench was deserted as I sat down to read  
Beneath the long, straggly branches of an old willow tree . . .  
Disillusioned by life, and with good reason to frown,  
For the world was intent on dragging me down.  
And if that weren't enough to ruin my day,  
A young boy out of breath approached me,  
all tired from play.  
He stood right before me with his head tilted down  
And said with great excitement, "Look what I found!"  
In his hand was a flower . . . what a pitiful sight,  
With its petals all worn—not enough rain, or too little light.

Hoping he'd take his dead flower and go off to play,  
I faked a small smile and then shifted away.  
But instead of retreating he sat next to my side  
Placed the flower to his nose, and declared with "surprise,"  
"It sure smells pretty and it's beautiful, too.  
That's why I picked it; here, it's for you."  
The weed before me was dying or dead.  
Not vibrant of colors: orange, yellow or red.  
But I knew I must take it, or he might never leave,  
So I reached for the flower, and replied, "Just what I need."  
But instead of him placing the flower in my hand,  
He held it mid-air without reason or plan.  
It was then that I noticed for the very first time  
That weed-toting boy could not see: he was blind.  
I heard my voice quiver; tears shone in the sun  
As I thanked him for picking the very best one.  
"You're welcome," he smiled, and then ran off to play,  
Unaware of the impact he'd had on my day.  
I sat there and wondered how he managed to see  
A self-pitying person 'neath an old willow tree.  
How did he know of my self-indulged plight?  
Perhaps from his heart, he'd been blessed with true sight.  
Through the eyes of a blind child, at last I could see  
The world's not the problem; the problem is me.  
And for all of those times I myself had been blind,  
I vowed to appreciate beauty in life, and every second that's mine.  
Then I held that wilted flower up to my nose  
And breathed in the fragrance of a beautiful rose  
And smiled as I watched that young boy,  
another weed in his hand,  
About to change the life of an unsuspecting old man.

—Author Unknown

## HEALTH AND HOME

### Ten Spring-Cleaning and Organizing Tips

Along with spring come thoughts of crisp, fresh air; newly budding flowers; singing birds; and a sense of renewal. Getting organized and doing a bit of spring cleaning helps to bring that wonderful fresh feeling into your home and office.

Here are 10 tips to help you start the season off right.

#### 1. Assign yourself a different task for each day.

Make yourself a schedule that assigns an hour for one task each day. Your schedule may look something like this:

Monday: Decluttering  
Tuesday: Dusting  
Wednesday: Vacuuming  
Thursday: Scrubbing  
Friday: Organizing and rearranging  
Saturday: Laundering  
Sunday: Decorating

Spend 1 hour each day doing your assigned task for each room throughout your house. You'll be amazed at the difference you can make in your home by following this simple system.

#### 2. Use the proper tools.

When you are cleaning and organizing, it's important to use tools that help you get the job done as quickly as possible.

For instance, there are now dustcloths that allow you to dust quickly and easily, without any additional sprays. Just dust and be done with it.

Rubber gloves will help you deep clean, without drying out your hands, exposing them to harsh chemicals, or burning them in hot water.

Racks can hold mops, brooms, and other cleaning supplies in one organized place, rather than storing them loose and having them constantly tip over.

An apron with lots of pockets can help you transport cleaning products from room to room easily so that you don't have to keep running back and forth to get what you need.

#### 3. Be ruthless when it comes to decluttering.

If you don't love it and/or use it, it's clutter. Spring is the perfect time to embrace the Feng Shui art of uncluttered living. Feng Shui teaches that if energy can easily flow through a room, your life will be more harmonious and happy—and clutter is an obstacle to reaching this relaxed and calm state.

Make it a quest of yours to be ruthless when it comes to your decluttering efforts. You'll have less to dust, less clutter to look at, an easier time finding the things you do use, and less stress in your life.

#### 4. Donate or sell the things you don't use.

If you have items that you don't use but are in good condition, they are prime candidates to sell or donate. Gather all of these items together; then decide whether you would prefer to donate them or sell them.

If you choose to donate, consider giving them to your local Salvation Army or perhaps a shelter or orphanage in town. Many of these

organizations will even pick up your donations for you.

If you choose to sell, you might set a date for a yard sale or put the items up for sale online on an auction Web site.

#### 5. Make your spring cleaning and organizing fun.

Don't think of it as a chore. Instead, think of it as a feel-good exercise—one that will really help you to feel good about yourself and your clean and organized environment.

Play some lively, fun, upbeat music. Dance your way through your home or office with your dustcloth or vacuum.

Get the family involved. Give everyone a task; then do something relaxing afterwards, like watching a movie together or going to the park for a walk.

Set timers and play "beat the clock." Give yourself time limits for completing small tasks and try to complete those tasks before the timer goes off.

Ask a friend to help, or do a swap. You clean her living room if she'll clean your kitchen.

#### 6. Eliminate distractions.

Turn off the TV while you're cleaning and organizing, and let your answering machine field your calls.

If a friend stops by while you're working, simply tell him or her that you've scheduled this time for spring cleaning. He or she is free to stay as long as you can continue working. You might even get some help. If not, tell your friend you'll stop by his or her house later on when you're done.

#### 7. Make yourself a checklist.

Make a checklist of all springtime jobs that you only do once or twice a year. Perhaps you might bring your large comforters to the Laundromat, bring your drapes and winter coats to the dry cleaner, store your winter clothes and bring your warm-weather clothes out of hiding, or check the smoke detectors.

If all of these odd jobs are on a list, you won't forget to do them. Try to do at least one or two of these odd jobs per week throughout the spring.

#### 8. Don't forget about the insides.

It's important to clean and organize things that are in sight all of the time. However, it's also important to remember those items that are out of sight. Spring is a great season to organize your closets, cabinets, drawers, bins, boxes, pantry, and other inside storage areas.

Give yourself that spring feeling, both inside and out!



### 9. Enjoy the weather while you're working.

Do some outside organizing and yard work so that you can be accomplishing something while enjoying the nice weather.

Gather your gardening and planting supplies in one place. Replace old and broken tools. You might want to get a gardening caddy to store your good gardening tools.

### 10. Open your windows.

There's nothing like taking in a breath of fresh air. As you're cleaning, open the curtains and windows. You'll be removing musty winter odors and protecting yourself from inhaling harsh fumes from cleaning products; plus, the fresh air will keep you going.

(Source: Maria Gracia, *Get Organized Now!* <http://www.getorganizednow.com>)

## WORK AND LIFE

### Five Ways To Jump-Start Your Company's Ethics

In the year since Congress made the Sarbanes-Oxley Act the salve for a scandal-rocked world, there's been no boom in ethical corporate behavior—just a proliferation of rules and regulations. The sad fact is that all the oversight in the world is not going to change what happens behind company doors. Want to make a real difference in your organization? That is going to take some hard, serious work. Here's where to start.

### Change Your Vocabulary

"Ethics" has become too loaded a word to have much practical meaning. When the situation demands, try substituting "responsibility" or "decency." Instead of "Is it the ethical thing to do," ask "Is it the responsible/decent thing to do?" Gets to the heart of the matter, doesn't it? Act accordingly.

### Take the Values-Statement Challenge

Get comfortable with your company's values statement. It probably includes such words as "honesty" and "commitment," just as Enron's did. To make the values more concrete, write a short essay defining each one, giving specific, real-life examples from your company. Next, identify examples of internal company practices that contradict those values. Do the same for the values you proclaim publicly.

### Be a Know-It-All

What bad news do you keep from yourself? Did that environmental impact statement for the new facility belong in the fiction section? Are your hiring practices a discrimination lawsuit waiting to happen? It's time to face the music. Your new mantra: "There is nothing I don't want to know." (Hint: Your public relations director can be a great source of information. Convince him or her that you want the truth.)

### Hold a Risk Brainstorm

Establish a quarterly process that encourages employees to answer this question: What puts this company at risk in the next year (or 5)? The people below you know what's going on. Listen to them. Identify risks that get at issues of responsibility and decency. If you have one, take your company's online ethics course. If it doesn't help you deal with the risks you've identified, start work on one that's relevant.

### Slash Your Pay

Do you earn a rich salary and bonus while your employees take pay cuts or lose their jobs? Meet with your boss (or the board, if you are the CEO) and negotiate a lower compensation package. Publicize what you've done. It may sound crazy, but in an environment of mistrust, sacrifices by top executives go a long way toward creating a culture of trust, mutual respect, and responsible business practices.

(Source: Barbary Ley Toffler, the coauthor of *Final Accounting: Ambition, Greed and the Fall of Arthur Andersen*, Broadway Books, March 2003. Printed at <http://www.fastcompany.com>.)

## FINANCES

### Seven More Sneaky—and Fairly Painless—Ways To Build a Nest Egg (continued from last month)

#### 11. Convert a bad habit into a good one.

Give up cigarettes—or even cut your habit by half—and put that money in the savings drawer. If you drop a pack-a-day habit by half, you could easily bank well over \$100 by spring.

#### 12. Employ the "Dollar Bill Savings Plan."

This is a souped-up version of the change jar concept, but this time you're saving dollar bills.

Here's how it works: When you leave the house in the morning, you don't carry anything smaller than a \$5 bill. When you get change, don't spend the singles unless it's for tips. At the end of the day, any dollar bills go into your cash stash.

#### 13. Institute a coin-operated laundry.

Put a jar on top of the washer and put in a quarter—or two—every time you throw a load in the washer or dryer. Get your finances in order while you clean.

#### 14. Stop the (movie) madness!

When you return your movies on time, pay yourself the late fee. If you rent a movie or two every week, you'll be surprised how quickly that \$1.50 to \$4 can add up.

#### 15. Diet for dollars.

Trying to lose weight this season? Every time you go without dessert—or that mid-afternoon candy-bar break—put the cost of your forgone

goody into your savings jar. You shed weight and gain some green at the same time.

#### 16. Use the pay phone.

Do you make a lot of calls? Pop a quarter in a jar by the phone every time you dial a long-distance number.

Bonus money: find a better deal on your calling plan. Put the difference into the phone jar each month, too.

#### 17. Bank "extra" paychecks.

Get paid weekly or biweekly? This tip is for you. Most people set up their budgets to accommodate two to four paychecks every month, depending on their pay schedule. But several times a year, you get an extra paycheck in the month. (Hurray!) So instead of heading to the mall, pretend you never saw it. Put it in a savings account or put it in your rainy-day jar.

Having a fund with a few extra checks is really useful over the years—it can help pay for everything from unforeseen car repairs to emergency doctor and dental visits.

(Source: Dana Dratch, freelance writer based in Atlanta; <http://www.Bankrate.com>)

### Questions/Comments to:

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An online version of this newsletter may be found at <http://www.hq.nasa.gov/office/codec/cc/navig-5.pdf>

